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## Growing Old Is Unnecessary Says Thos. Edison, 73 Today

America's Miracle Man in Interesting Advice on the Acceptance of Old Age and How to Enjoy It With a Diet of Work and Success.

"Do you believe that there is really any such thing as growing old?"

This is the question that was put to Thomas A. Edison, grand old man of American science, on the occasion of his seventy-third birthday. And here is Thomas Edison's reply:

"If man delighted in studying the natural element in which he exists, and if he used his knowledge to protect his body against the malignant actions of his environment, I think that he would live at least twice as long as now, with his mentality unimpaired at the end of life. As man learns more of his environment and is thus able to protect himself more and more, there is no reason that I can see why his term of life should not be as long as that of the Sequoia trees of California, which is several thousand years."

### How Edison Talked.

It was under unusual circumstances that the wizard of electricity, who makes it a rule never to give out interviews, consented to talk for publication. Several weeks ago a national campaign was instituted for the placing in every American home of the two Edison biographies, "The Life and Inventions of Thomas Edison," by Dyer and Martin, and William H. Meadowcroft's "The Boys' Life of Edison." A representative of Harper & Brothers, the publishers, called at the inventor's office in the Orange, N. J., laboratories, and was introduced to "the old man" by Mr. Meadowcroft, who, in addition to being Mr. Edison's biographer, is his business assistant.

"So you're from Harpo, are you?"

said the inventor, with a kindly smile, as he shook hands with the visitor. "You know, I'm not literary. Some people can write long things offhand, and get up before a great crowd of people and make smooth speeches, but I can't understand how they do it!" He paused reflectively, and, shaking his head, repeated, "No, I'm not literary."

The aged scientist, whose hearing is poor, tho his constitution is otherwise robust, put his hand to his ear for the reply. "Thank God for that!" said the publisher.

A smile started in a corner of Mr. Edison's mouth and grew in both directions until it completely overspread the imposingly handsome face. "You want an interview, do you?" he said. "Write down your questions, and I'll see if I can dictate the answers for you."

Three questions in addition to the one given above were asked. The questions and answers follow:

### "Try Hobbies."

"Do you believe it is a good thing for a boy to map out his career years ahead, or just peg away?" "No, the boy, while being educated, should try many hobbies, changing from one to another as many times as he desires, the more the better, until he finds one that delights him—one that he is sure he will succeed in after he leaves school—because he is happy while pursuing it after trying many other hobbies. With this hobby he can succeed, and with no other, because when a man is vitally interested in a thing his memory becomes

highly efficient in that pursuit, but in all other lines normal. A good memory means executive ability, and with this comes 'Do It Now.' "What, in your opinion, constitutes success?" was another question.

"The above combination means success. It never fails," was Mr. Edison's reply.

The question, "Who were the friends whose confidence gave you encouragement when you were struggling for a foothold?" brought forth this characteristic reply:



Thomas A. Edison.

"I had no such friends. They were not necessary. In fact, they are disadvantageous. The hard path gives one experience. One loses this if they are helped by friends. It is like having a rich father."

### Mr. Meadowcroft Reminisces.

For once, the spirit of business that hovers over the laboratory in Orange, N. J., seemed to have been dispelled. Mr. Meadowcroft, the old man's biographer and assistant, who has worked side by side with him for many years, neglected the heap of papers on his desk long enough to tell a tale or two from his store of reminiscences of his beloved chief.

"My mind is so filled up with business matters that it is pretty hard to get down to spinning yarns," declared Mr. Meadowcroft, rubbing his grizzled mustache reflectively.

"You know, it was only out of love for the old man that I took the time to write the 'Boys' Life of Edison.' I showed him the 'Life and Inventions of Thomas Edison,' with its diagrams and plates of his inventions, when the first copies were ready after two years of work, and he looked at the volumes and said, 'Are folks really going to read all of that?'"

"Even at the age of 73," continued Mr. Meadowcroft, "Mr. Edison is as energetic as ever and there seems to be no diminution of his mental activity. He comes down to his laboratory every morning and plunges right into the activities of the day with his accustomed vim. While he does not work late into the night at the laboratory as required, he works every night until eleven or twelve o'clock at home and comes down to the laboratory prepared for the day's work, frequently bringing a lot of memoranda he has written to numerous officials and heads of departments the night before. He has an intimate and exact knowledge of everything that is going on in the entire plant, and is in the habit of asking pointed questions as to the progress of matters, showing that he is conversant with what has gone on the day before. The mental activity and intimate knowledge of affairs frequently amazes our people whose efforts are along certain definite lines, while his knowledge covers the entire plant in all its varied activities."

"Besides this, when he comes down in the mornings he is fully posted on the important news of the world and the state of the markets. His knowledge of all these things is an actual working knowledge, marvelous in its comprehensiveness."

### When Edison Chats.

"Sometimes he will sit down and chat with me for a few minutes, and these are always interesting moments. These chats cover a great variety of subjects. Yesterday he came to my desk and I showed him a photograph of himself, a snapshot which some one had taken of him one day when he was in New York. We rather thought that that photograph was good, but he didn't. He said:

"It is almost impossible to get a really good photograph of a person. A difference of a thousandth of an inch in lens will produce a different expression in a person's face. If you will take this photograph and compare it with a half-dozen others taken at different times, you will scarcely realize it is the same person." We got out a few photographs and compared them and the difference was, indeed, striking.

"The other day," continued the biographer of Edison, "a boy came in with a memorandum from one of the heads of the department. Mr. Edison read it and then gave the boy a verbal message. The boy went out, and Mr. Edison turned to me with a humorous twinkle in his eye and said: 'When that boy has gone fifty feet he will be absolutely unable to remember that message correctly. There is one boy around here who can carry a message about two hundred feet, and I have only seen one lately that could carry a message all the way to the other building down the yard. So I very rarely send an oral message, but I write it.'"

### Edison on Food.

"Some time ago, Mr. Edison was chatting with me about food. He believes that most of us eat too much and load our systems with a lot of impurities which tend to produce disease and shorten life. He, himself, is a small eater. I have seen him many times finish eating in what most of us would call the middle of a meal, and light up his cigar. If he ever has any trouble with his stomach, he will either stop eating altogether for two or three days, or else he will take boiled milk and thin, dry toast. I have known him to make his meals of this for three times a day for a week—the idea being that if his stomach trouble is caused by bacilli he will not furnish any additional supply from the outside."

"One day, when talking on the subject of food, he mentioned the fact that some explorers in Labrador perished from starvation and contended that it was thru ignorance, as at their feet there was an unlimited supply of food that would have kept them alive until they could reach supplies of regular food. He referred to a peculiar kind of moss that grows in Labrador, which, when boiled, yields a jelly-like food capable of sustaining them."

"Naturally," continued Mr. Meadowcroft, "we have visitors from all parts of the world, who come to see Mr. Edison, and whether they come from different parts of our own country, or from various other countries in the world, no matter how distant, they are usually astounded when Mr. Edison talks to them about their own localities or countries just as familiarly as if he had been there in person."

In commemoration of Mr. Edison's 73rd birthday, bookstores throughout the country are placarded today with posters bearing the legend, "73," and announcements of the Dyer and Martin and Meadowcroft biographies.

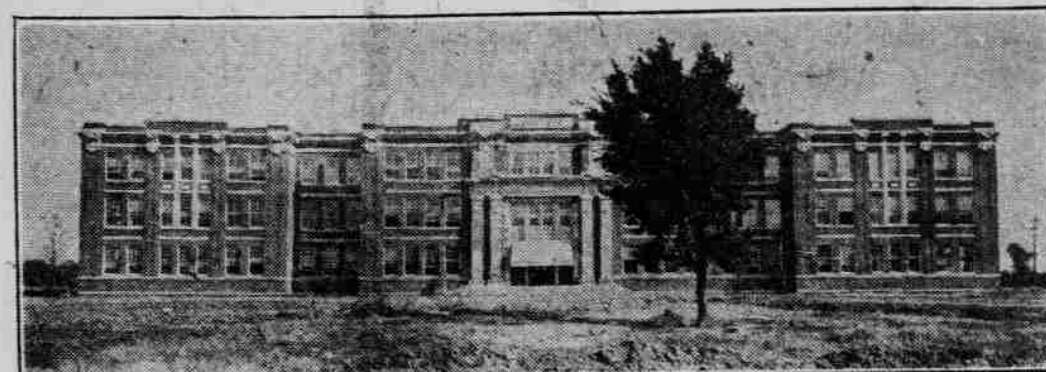
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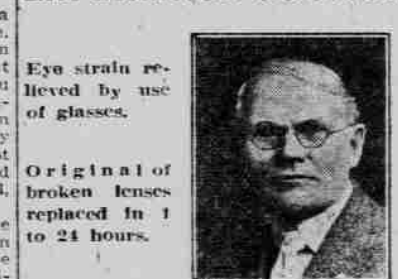
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owercroft, "we have visitors from all parts of the world, who come to see Mr. Edison, and whether they come from different parts of our own country, or from various other countries in the world, no matter how distant, they are usually astounded when Mr. Edison talks to them about their own localities or countries just as familiarly as if he had been there in person."

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American railroads have cost \$80,900 a mile—road-bed, structures, stations, yards, terminals, freight and passenger trains—everything from the great city terminals to the last spike.

A good concrete-and-asphalt highway costs \$36,000 a mile—just a bare road, not counting the cost of culverts, bridges, etc.

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They are capitalized for only \$71,000 a mile—much less than their actual value. Seventy-one thousand dollars today will buy one locomotive.

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